

BIBLE 101 — Week 6

Never Read a Bible Verse ... By Itself

Scripture Focus: Philippians 4:13 · Jeremiah 29:11 · Matthew 18:20

KEY VOCABULARY — scan this before you watch

Term	What It Means
Proof Texting	Pulling a single sentence out of its original home and treating it like a standalone _____ cookie saying
Pericope	A complete _____ unit — a whole argument, story, or point that a verse belongs to
Context	The surrounding material that reveals the author's intended _____ — it doesn't limit the meaning, it reveals it
Pretext	A fancy word for an _____ — what you get when you rip a verse out of context and make it mean whatever you want

I. THE PROBLEM: FORTUNE-COOKIE READING

The most common reason we misunderstand Scripture isn't a lack of intelligence or spirituality — it's the habit of pulling a single _____ out of its original home.

When we treat the Bible less like a library of carefully constructed arguments and more like a dictionary of _____ quotes, we fall into proof texting.

Key principle: "A text without a context is a _____ for whatever you wanted to say."

When you rip a verse out of its context, you can make it mean almost _____ — even something the original author would have totally disagreed with.

II. THE SOLUTION: FINDING THE COMPLETE THOUGHT

If the problem is reading verses by themselves, the solution is finding the author's complete _____.

The technical term is **pericope** — think of it as a complete thought _____: a whole argument, story, or point.

Our job as readers: find the pericope _____ we try to figure out what a verse means.

How to find the pericope:

- Look for _____ breaks in your translation — they signal a new idea is starting
- Look for _____ shifts — places where the author clearly changes gears
- Keep reading until you can say: "I get the full _____ they're making here."

III. THREE FAMOUS VERSES PUT BACK IN CONTEXT

Verse 1 — Philippians 4:13

	OUT OF CONTEXT	IN CONTEXT
Feels like ...	A promise of unlimited _____ to achieve anything	The strength for internal _____ in any circumstance
Key detail	Motivational poster on a gym wall	Paul wrote this from a _____ cell
"All things" means ...	Winning, succeeding, _____	Being content whether feasting or _____, celebrated or in chains

Verse 2 — Jeremiah 29:11

	OUT OF CONTEXT	IN CONTEXT
Feels like ...	A personal promise for a great career and _____ life	A long-term promise that an entire _____ will be restored
Key detail	Found on countless _____ cards	Written to a nation conquered and dragged into _____
The promise is ...	Immediate _____ for one person	A light at the end of a _____-year tunnel

Verse 3 — Matthew 18:20

	OUT OF CONTEXT	IN CONTEXT
Feels like ...	Encouragement for small group _____	A promise about the serious process of church _____
Key detail	About the size of a worship _____	The two or three are _____ required for confrontation
The verse is about ...	Attendance	_____

⏸ PAUSE & REFLECT

Pick one of the three verses above. How does the in-context meaning differ from what you always assumed? Does the real meaning feel more or less powerful to you?

IV. THE PATTERN: SHALLOW SLOGANS vs. DEEP TRUTHS

Out-of-context reading gives us shallow, _____ slogans that can set us up with false expectations about life.

In-context reading gives us specific, deep _____ that build a truly resilient faith — one that can handle hardship and complexity.

The most important takeaway:

Context doesn't _____ the meaning — it _____ it.

Context is the key that unlocks what the _____ was trying to say all along.

V. YOUR CHALLENGE THIS WEEK

Step 1: Before you interpret any verse, commit to reading the whole _____ it's in.

Step 2: Ask yourself: What's the main _____ the author is trying to make here?

Step 3: Pick a favorite verse and read the entire _____ it comes from. See what you discover.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to say "a text without a context is a pretext"? Can you think of a verse you've seen used as a proof text?

2. Why do you think out-of-context readings are so popular — even in churches? What makes them appealing, and what's the danger?

3. Pick a verse you love. Read the full paragraph and chapter around it this week. What did you discover that you hadn't seen before?
